



The New Orleans Bicycle Project

Project Proposal

Prepared for: New Orleans Regional Transportation Authority
Veolia Transportation thru its subsidiary VeloWay
Louisiana Regional Planning Commission
New Orleans Department of Public Works
French Market Corporation
Downtown Development District
New Orleans City Council

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Executive Summary

Mission Statement

Taken directly from Chapter 13, Section 3.M concerning Transportation & Bicycle Strategies within the “Plan for the 21st century: New Orleans 2030”, more commonly known as the Master Plan, the New Orleans Bicycle Project (NOBP) is seeking to establish “Roulez!” a ‘24/7 shared bicycle rental system’ to the New Orleans area. Through a combination of public/private funds NOBP expects to install, operate and maintain a fleet of 1000+ bicycles. These bicycles, which are available for short-term hourly rentals, can be found at any of the proposed 120 bicycle stations strategically located throughout the New Orleans area.

Vision Statement

To provide New Orleans residents and visitors with a fun, green and healthy alternative form of transportation for traveling throughout the city, simultaneously promoting an individually responsible, ecological friendly/healthy lifestyle and to showcase innovation and recovery in New Orleans. New Orleans is uniquely suited to bicycle transportation as its municipal density and geographic layout make bicycle transportation an ideal alternative to motor vehicles.

Goals

- To secure \$1.5M in funding from the Federal Transportation Authority’s TIGER ARRA Grant program with the New Orleans Regional Transportation Authority, acting as our municipal agency sponsor.
- We are actively seeking strategic partnership(s) with the Regional Planning Commission, New Orleans Department of Public Works, Downtown Development District, Metropolitan Bicycle Commission and Bicycle Mapping Project of New Orleans to assist in the planning and development of public awareness campaigns, bike paths, and contra flow studies.
- Securing Veolia to have the NOPB and Roulez! as an integral part of the public transportation plan.
- To partner with an outdoor advertising agency such as JC Decaux which operates (6) similar operations through its Cyclocity subsidiary; or similar U.S. agency such as Clearchannel Communications, to offset operational costs.
- To have an initial rollout of 100+ bicycles installed, available and ready for the public by autumn of 2009 with a total phased implementation of 1000+ bicycles by end of year 2010.



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Sustainability

We expect Roulez! to become a self sustaining entity through membership subscriptions, short term one-off rentals, and advertising revenue on street furniture kiosks and stations.

Fiscally

In Paris JC Decaux's 1,628 billboards earn €60 million euros per year - or about €600 million euros total for the ten year contract. This factors out to €36,855 per. Mirroring Paris, Roulez! is looking to generate revenue from advertising on its street furniture and bicycles.

Safety from Liability

NOBP is adopting the recommendations outlined by the Regional Planning Commission's 2005 New Orleans Metropolitan Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan and is looking to integrate the work accomplished through the New Orleans Bicycle Mapping Project to provide a map of 'bike friendly' streets based upon traffic counts, road usage/times, terrain and grade of road surface. Roulez!, while not providing a helmet to riders advocates that riders wear a helmet at all times while using the Roulez! system.

How Roulez! Works

NOBP, its partner Veloway and Veolia Transportation are attempting to implement an important innovation over earlier city bike sharing programs. Amsterdam famously put free bicycles on the street in the 1960s, but they were not well maintained and eventually all were stolen. Starting in the late 1990s, both JC Decaux and Clear Channel improved on this model, with successful automated and credit card based programs in Rennes, Amsterdam, Vienna, Lyons, Oslo, Brussels, Stockholm, Helsinki, and Barcelona. The Vélib program in Paris is however by far the largest and the most successful; and from it we've learned that when it comes to bike sharing programs, size (and density) matters.

NOBP has created Roulez! utilizing the proven VeloWay Veolia Transportation model which requires the rider to pick up and return the bike at automated, self-service bike stations. Riders have a choice of either an annual membership or pay for short term subscriptions for daily, weekend or weekly usage. A one-day subscription costs 5 dollars, a weekly subscription costs 20 dollars and an annual membership costs 40 dollars. Terminals at each station allow the purchase of a short term subscription with a credit card, which gives you a subscriber number and a PIN. Getting the bicycle then only requires typing the number into the terminal any time during your subscription period, selecting a bike stand number, and stepping to the stand to unlock the bike. Annual members use their smart card and just swipe it at the parking stand instead of going to the terminal.



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In addition to paying the subscription fee, short term users must pay a security deposit of 150 dollars, which is pre-authorized on their credit card to help guarantee the return of the bikes. ¹



Beyond this, for the first 30 minutes, the bicycle is free to use. However, after that, usage costs are incurred (see table). This system, including the pricing system, is designed for short range, individual trips. As a result, in the previous rollouts in the above mentioned cities, in the first two months of operation, 92 percent of the trips lasted less than 30 minutes.

The bike comes with its own lock for intermediate stops, but when the user is finished, the bike has to be returned to one of the conveniently located Roulez! stations. Study has shown that mass and density are paramount in the success of a bike-share. There will be enough stations that riders can readily find one within five minutes walking distance from one. NOBP will implement Roulez! in a controlled phased roll-out of 1000+ bicycles and 120+ stations. If a station has no empty stand, 10 minutes of free time can be added in order to reach another station by swiping the smartcard or logging into the terminal. The terminal also shows the status of nearby stations and their current number of empty slots.



Roulez! stations will tend to be located on either unused bus-stops, converted parking spaces, partnered destination spots and Department of Public Works (NODPW) 20ft. corner curb easements. Modular, they can be bolted into the ground or more permanently installed to a buildings existing facade or sidewalk. They are energy efficient and self sustaining as they are outfitted with solar panels which provides power to the kiosk.



In Paris, the master layout plan was done by the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APU). New Orleans, like its sister city Paris, may have many stations near historical landmarks and may require approvals from local, state, federal and historic commissions. Garnering support from these groups will be critical to the success of the program which is why we are working through the Regional Transit Authority; acting as our sponsoring authority in real estate negotiations NORTA may be able to garner support for Roulez! as part of a larger public transportation project.

¹ We are also looking into adopting the Louisiana Purchase Card as a discounted authorization card for individuals receiving public assistance so that they have equal access to the program as they are probably users that would have the greatest need. By offering equal access at a discounted rate to the economically challenged we hope to dramatically reduce theft.



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Although we are planning for the system to have about 70 percent more parking stands than bikes in operation, the even distribution of bikes and open stands at stations remains the main challenge of the system. We are seeking funding to conduct a study to determine proper optimization of station sizes and locations which currently presents an interesting challenge to system planners.

Logistics

Because it will be difficult to predict where pick-ups and drop-offs would concentrate, Roulez! is envisioning conducting daily balancing with 5 compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles dedicated to shifting bikes from full to empty stations and removing damaged bikes to the maintenance facility. This will occur at a minimum of three (3) times a day.



Why Veloway Bikes

We've given particular attention to a bike design that would blend elegantly in the New Orleans landscape. At 48 pounds (compared to about 25 for a standard commercial bike), the optional three-speed bike is not designed for speed, but to be substantial, sturdy, and to handle some 11,000 miles in a year in New Orleans'

infamous poorly maintained roads. Particular attention was given to prevent taking on passengers. Thus, there is no back rack, no horizontal frame bar, and no child seat option although all bikes are equipped with a carryall basket attached to the front fork/handlebar.

The shifting, dynamo and brake systems are all located inside wheel hubs. Control chips inside the bikes report on their condition, as well as on tire pressure and on the bright LED lights, directly to the central computer via the docking stand. If a bike is defective, it remains automatically locked on its stand (a red light appears) until a mechanic clears it. Bikes returned to the stand for less than a minute stay locked for inspection as well.

Weight, along with the distinctive design, was also thought to discourage theft. Where this program is in place in Europe some of the bikes have been removed from the stations by sawing through the arm that locks the bike to the rack. In most cases though, thieves simply took bikes improperly locked by their users.

Bicycles aside, Veloway has the know how and experience to provide a turn key program providing not only the bicycles and accompanying infrastructure but also maintenance for the project for a five (5) year commitment period through Veolia Transportation integrating the program into its regular maintenance program within the Regional Transit Authority.



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Contact Information

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James (Jim) Drury brings over 20 years of large scale redevelopment administration & management experience to the New Orleans Bicycle Project. Jim's role in founding the New Orleans Bicycle Project was to bring about a systematic change to how visitors and citizens of New Orleans interact and travel around the city. A bicycle has the potential to break all class, race, gender and socio-economic boundaries.

Chase Wegmann

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Prior to becoming Executive Director of NOBP Chase Wegmann had over 7 years of strategic planning experience launching new products and brands as Director of Business Development & Client Strategy with Ogilvy and its subsidiary EmPower Research. As a New Orleans native he is civically involved in a number of New Orleans revitalization projects.

Julia Wessman

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Julia Wessman matriculated at Brown University and received her Masters at the Sorbonne in Paris where she experienced firsthand the ease of use and success of Velib. Returning home she touted Roulez! to the Idea Village as part of a 504Ward competition whereafter she teamed up with NOBP to become its Deputy Director & General Manager of Roulez!